

## Programming Unit: Descriptions

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### **PROGRAMMING TEAM**

The Office of Special Education Programming Team provides support to schools in the implementation and monitoring of special education services that promote student achievement, inclusion and independence. The team supports and monitors teachers who provide specialized instruction and research-based interventions to students who are exhibiting academic and/or behavioral challenges. We collaborate with schools and other departments in OSE to ensure that school staff is prepared to meet the unique educational needs of students. Specific initiatives relative to instructional and dedicated paraprofessionals, student placement and non-public reduction, student access to assistive technology, transition services, and transportation are part of our teams' work. The unit is divided into three distinct but well integrated areas: Academic Programs, Academic Supports and Secondary Transition Services. The following is a description of each unit.

#### **Academic Programs**

##### **Specialized Instruction**

The Specialized Instruction Team provides professional development and technical support in the areas of research based interventions and differentiated instruction for students with special learning needs. The team ensures that interventions are accessible to teachers and implemented with fidelity in order to increase student achievement. The overarching goal is to ensure that special education teachers are supported in the delivery of high quality instruction. Key areas of professional development include: reading interventions, classroom management, and inclusion align to the rigorous IMPACT evaluation system. Specialized instruction includes elementary and secondary instructional design programming support to schools.

##### **Autism**

The Autism Team provides professional development and technical support to teachers of students with Autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This includes Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) coaching, Autism rubric coaching, and family outreach and training. Team members ensure student and teacher success through data analysis, MDT collaboration and increased opportunities for inclusion. The success of the Autism team is the model upon which other teams in Academic Program team were built.

<http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/In+the+Classroom/Special+Education/Autism+Program+and+Resources>

##### **Behavioral and Educational Supports (BES)**

The Behavior Support Services Team provides support to teachers working with students who are either diagnosed with emotional disabilities or struggling with challenging behaviors in self-contained

classrooms or inclusion settings. The behavior team is supported by experienced coaches who are trained in Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) and Safetycare. Coaches support schools in developing and maintaining a strong continuum of behavioral support services for students with emotional disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive setting with their peers.

### **R.I.S.E.**

R.I.S.E. (Readiness. Innovation. Scholarship. Excellence.) is a district-wide program, co-located on several DCPS campuses. R.I.S.E. provides comprehensive and specialized instructional programs for secondary students in a small classroom setting. Each classroom provides a safe and structured learning environment, which prioritizes effective communication between the home, school and community. R.I.S.E. students receive their educational services in the least restrictive environment. This program was created to build internal capacity to serve a wide range of DCPS students.

### **Low Incidence-Sensory Impairment**

The Low Incidence-Sensory Impairment Team supports students with hearing or vision impairments, PS-12. Students with sensory impairments are now being grouped together in cluster programs for services and instruction. The clusters are marked by rigorous teacher and paraprofessional training; sensory-specific, expanded core curriculum, and community partners that will ensure the success of our students as they learn with their peers in general education settings. This cluster concept is a first of its kind for DCPS and possible model for other students with IEPs.

## **Academic Supports**

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The LRE Review Team utilizes DCPS policies and procedures and IDEA requirements to provide FAPE for special education students in the least restrictive environment. The LRE review process includes student observations, record reviews, and stakeholder interviews to provide recommendations to schools (local, non-public, and charter) for students suspected of needing a more restrictive school setting. The team also provides technical assistance to school staff in developing the capacity to successfully integrate students in less restrictive environments.

### **Section 504**

DCPS supports school compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, thereby ensuring that eligible students with disabilities are able to access their education. The Rehabilitation Act guarantees access to education for students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The 504 Program Specialist is available for guidance to school staff with the entire 504 process.

### **Extended School Year**

The DCPS ESY program is designed to provide services during extended school breaks for students who showed substantial regression and recoupment during the previous IEP year and/or there is evidence of

emerging or "breakthrough" skills. ESY services are provided beyond the regular school year and are designed to meet goals included in student's individualized education program (IEP).

### **Assistive Technology**

AT includes any item, piece of equipment or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the developmental capabilities of children with disabilities. The Assistive Technology department uses tablets, computers, augmentative communication devices, and adaptive technology to allow students with disabilities access to the curriculum. DCPS AT Coordinators and Specialists train school-based teams to ensure the devices are used effectively.

### **Transportation**

The Office of Transportation is responsible for providing the safe and efficient transportation of all eligible students to and from schools and school activities each day. DCPS collaborates with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education Division of Transportation (OSSE-DOT) to manage transportation for all eligible students from DC Public, Public Charter, and Non-Public Schools. The OSSE-DOT provides the special education transportation via school bus or public transit.

## **Secondary Transition Services and Programs**

DCPS believes that, when given opportunities that challenge them to grow and provide supports for that growth, our students can become successful adults who are engaged in their communities, are in careers they love, and live as independently as possible. We believe that our students with disabilities can meet and exceed even these expectations. The programs listed below assist students with secondary transition.

- **Project SEARCH**
- **Bridges...From School To Work**
- **Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program**
- **Connection to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)**

### **Project SEARCH**

Project SEARCH is a competitive one-year, high school transition program that provides skills training and work experience for accepted students ages 18-21. At Project SEARCH, students move through supported employment rotations in a variety of offices within a government agency or private organization. To participate, each student has to apply to the program and be accepted by the selection committee.

At Project SEARCH, students learn employable skills in the classroom and practical job skills while at work. As a result, students work with a variety of resources to support them. At the job site, students have access to a training classroom, a business liaison, mentors and different rotational internships for on-the-job training. Students also have an instructor and transition coordinator.



Through Project SEARCH, students are eligible for career counseling, job coaching, placement services and follow-along services with the District's Rehabilitation Services Administration. Those students participating in the Project SEARCH program will have access to job coaches provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

DCPS has partnered with Project SEARCH since the 2009-10 school year. More than 35 DCPS students have participated in the program, serving at the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services. Teachers often refer students to apply to Project SEARCH, but students also can seek these programs out for themselves and apply.

#### **Project SEARCH Admissions Criteria**

- Must be on the IEP Certificate Track
- Students must agree that their participation in this program will conclude their enrollment in school
- The minimum age for the program is 18 and the maximum age is 21
- Strong attendance record is preferred
- Desire to work in an office setting

For more information about Project SEARCH or to learn more about the application process, please email [osetransition@dc.gov](mailto:osetransition@dc.gov)

#### **Bridges...From School to Work**

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Created by the nonprofit Marriott Foundation, the Bridges program creates job placements to meet the workforce needs of local employers and the career goals of young people with disabilities. Students have the opportunity to learn job readiness, interviewing and resume-building skills. During the 2009-10 school year, Bridges enrolled approximately 30 DCPS students across the District.

Since then, DCPS has ramped up recruitment and enrollment for Bridges, with 70 students participating in the program for the 2010-11 school year. Through this program, 28 DCPS students have secured a permanent work position after graduation.

#### **Bridges Admissions Criteria**

- 17 years old or older
- Must attend school on a half-day schedule
- Must be able to use public transportation

For more information about the Bridges from School to Work, or to learn more about the application process, please email [osetransition@dc.gov](mailto:osetransition@dc.gov)

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### Competitive Employment Opportunity (CEO) Program

The DCPS Competitive Employment Opportunities Program (CEO Program) provides high school age students with disabilities the opportunity to connect with professional mentors who work in a range of competitive occupations. CEO mentors expose students to the world of competitive employment and help guide students through the career exploration process.

Program coursework includes paid weekly professional development classes, guided correspondence with mentors and career focused capstone projects. Upon completion of the program, mentors assist participants in applying for paid summer internships at their place of employment. In order to maximize savings, eligible students are encouraged to enroll in Individualized Development Accounts (IDA) in order to receive 2X matched savings for use towards continued education after high school.

#### **CEO Admissions Criteria**

- 16 – 18 year old students committed to excellence
- Hard worker wanting to increase opportunities and exposure to competitive employment

For more information about the CEO Program, or to learn more about the application process, please go to <http://dcpsceo.com>

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### Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

RSA, which is a division of the DC Department on Disability Services, provides services to adults whose disabilities are a barrier to entering a trade school, college, university, or finding and maintaining competitive employment. In partnership with DCPS, RSA can begin working with DCPS students as early as age 14 to begin the process of determining whether their disability will be a barrier to their future career goals. Additionally, DCPS and RSA work together to determine whether a student is eligible to receive RSA services.

For eligible students likely to face barriers to employment after leaving high school, RSA can provide vocational rehabilitation services as early as age 16. These vocational rehabilitation services include job development, placement and coaching. Ultimately, these services help break down barriers and help DCPS students live independently as adults. Visit the [RSA website](#) to learn more about their mission and the services they provide.